



Pierre Gaultier Varennes Sieur de la Verendrye

**Captain of Naval Troops
Knight of the Military
Order of St. Louis**

Discoverer of the North-West



Born at Trois-Rivières, Que.,

November 17th. 1685-1686

Married October 20th. 1712

Died at Montreal, Dec. 6th. 1749



To
The Many Friends
In
Trois-Rivieres
Who Keep The Name
Of My Father
In Loving Memory.



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Pierre Gaultier Varennes
Sieur de la Vérendrye



THE DISCOVERY of the ROCKY MOUNTAINS

That no shadow of reproach may cling to the memory of my father's name these memoirs are published.

Louis-
Joseph
Gaultier.



It was never my intention to publish the notes we made of our voyages and discoveries, but, I do so, owing to the earnest solicitation of some friends who feel that I owe it to the memory of my father, to clear up whatever misunderstanding there may exist concerning the business transactions between the Montreal merchants and my father. The more so as there still seems to be some who think my father traded with the Indians on his own account and thus swindled the merchants.

That these merchants lost heavily in the enterprise is to be greatly regretted; no one was more sorry than my father. If they lost, so did he; as my father placed all his fortune in this venture.

In the first place, before signing the contract, he made it clear to them that his sole purpose

was discovery for the glory of New France. To do this he needed financial assistance. For this assistance he agreed to establish and maintain Trading Posts, guaranteeing ample returns on their investment, provided they furnished him the necessary equipment and sufficient supplies.

How they fulfilled their part of the contract will be seen by the narrative. It is only natural that those who lost so much money should feel badly. When the true history of the West shall be written, I am confident my father's name will be recorded on the pages of the "Book of Fame" alongside the greatest discoverers and explorers in Canada.

It is only proper that I say a few words in reference to the ancestors of our family, who ranked among the most aristocratic and distinguished that came from France to build new homes in Canada. My grandfather was René Gaultier, Knight and Sieur de Varennes. He was a Lieutenant in the Regiment of Carignan when he came to Canada. Two years later he married the twelve year old daughter of Pierre Boucher (Marie Boucher).

Pierre Boucher was ennobled by Louis XIV, the first patent of nobility granted to a Canadian. He fought in many battles. His bravery, his virtues, his culture, his courage, and above all his practical sense displayed in his defense of Trois-Rivieres merited his appointment as Governor of the city he had so valiantly defended. My grandfather, René Gaultier, succeeded his father-in-law, Pierre Boucher, as Governor.

My grandparents had ten children, my father was four years old when my grandfather died, and my grandmother was only thirty four. All were obliged to work and practice the strictest economy to keep the family together.

My father's favorite sister was Aunt Marie Renee, who was three years his senior. She was married at the age of nineteen to Christopher Dufrost de la Jemmeraye. A son of the same name in after years became my father's lieutenant, and it is from my cousin's notes that I have obtained the information of the earliest of my father's explorations. His sister, my cousin Marie-Marguerite, married François Medeline d'Youville, who died

leaving her a widow. Later she founded the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity.

I regret that space will not permit me to give some account of the early life of my dear cousin, Marguerite, who was sixteen years older than I. Our childhood days were spent together, but the story of her holy life and work must be told by one more skilled in writing.

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A History of Heroic Deeds Forms a Close Background for the Boys Living at the Close of the Seventeenth Century.

To fully understand the life and accomplishments of my father, we must realise that his whole existence was one constant romance. In his youth he dreamed great adventures and romantic exploits of exploration and discoveries.

Later he simply lived his dreams. To us boys he was always the greatest of all the great heroes. It was our great delight to hear him tell the stories of the early explorers. I can see him now as though it were but yesterday, his eyes glowing with excitement, as he seemed to live these adventures; many of them he had heard from the lips of the heroes themselves.

My father was born in the year 1685. The youth of this period lived in the heroic events of the colony, they were so near to them. Not a boy but was full of daring and enterprise. The deeds of Jacques Cartier 150 years before were fresh stories for these boys; and their grandfathers could tell actual experiences with such heroes as Champlain the founder of Quebec.

La Violette and Maisonneuve the founders of Trois-Rivières and Montréal, Nicolet, ambassador to the Indians, travelling as far as Georgian Bay and Sault Ste. Marie; Etienne Brulé, who was with Champlain at the founding of Quebec, the first white man to navigate Lakes Ontario and Superior; Joliet and Father Marquette who discovered the Mississippi only twelve years before the birth of my father.

François Marguerie, who placed his life in the hands of the Indians because he had given them his word that he would return; Thomas Godfrey; the Hertels; Radisson, when a lad of sixteen was captured by the Indians and led a life of adventure seldom exceeded by any work of romance; and to these add a host of others, and not least among this list of illustrious names is that of my grandfather, Pierre Boucher.

What deeds of bravery and adventure to inflame the imagination of youth. The Church furnished her share of heroes among these explorers and discoverers. From the long list of these brave missionaries I cite the name of Father Denis Jamet, who served Mass at Trois-Rivières before the coming of La Violette; Father Paul Lejeune, noted for his devoted service, self sacrifice, and the terrible sufferings he endured in his work among the Indians; Father Buteux, eighteen years of devotion to the savages of our village, and martyred in 1652; Father Le Caron, a great explorer who discovered Lake Huron; Frere Pacifique Duplessis who came to Trois-Rivières to instruct the natives before the village was founded.

Father Anne de Noue, by his indefatigable industry won the love of both red and white, was frozen to death on Lake St. Pierre, carrying succor to some distant settlers. And the Canadian Martyrs, Fathers Joques, Breboeuf, Lalemant, Daniel and Goepril, whose names are household words in Trois-Rivières.



Map on birchbark made by Ochakah, a guide.

My father's home, the house of the Governor, was the stopping place of all these voyageurs as they passed through the village, not once but many times; and what stories they could tell! No tale of fiction could equal the adventures they recounted. La Salle, Du Lhut, de la Tourette; the great adventures whose exploits took place about the time of my father's birth, must have been well known by my grandfather, the Governor.

My father had often seen and talked with Frontenac, and he was twelve years old when D'Iberville accomplished almost unbelievable deeds at Hudson Bay. Jacques de Noyon, well known by my father, as he was but 17 years older, was a romantic adventurer around the great lakes, pushing his canoe on the Rainy Lake even as far as Lake of the Woods.

My father was seven years old when the fourteen year old Madeleine de Vercheres so bravely defended her father's home at Vercheres, near Montreal.

Living in such an atmosphere of adventure my father had but one ambition—to be an explorer. The days of his youth were spent with boys of his age hunting and fishing.

When a young man he entered the military service of Canada as a Cadet. The Governor sent his Company into the New England states and then to Newfoundland. Later he was sent to France where he joined the Company of my uncle in Flanders. He received nine wounds in the battle of Malplaquet and won the rank of Lieutenant, however, this was of no financial benefit, as France did not confirm the promotion, due to lack of funds.

Shortly after the return of my father to Canada he married my mother, Marie-Anne Dandonneau du Sable, October 29, 1712. There were several noted explorers among my mother's relations. An uncle Jacques Babie in the years 1671-1688 traveled west as far as Baie des Puants (Green Bay) on the west side of Lake Michigan, and made a treaty with the Indian tribe, Outaouais.

Some other relative René Boucher, Sieur de la Perriere, Pierre Boucher de Boucherville and Boucher de Montbrun, received favorable notice by the Governor for the courage and ability they had

displayed in their intercourse with the savage tribes in the far West. In 1688 de Noyon, a native of Trois-Rivières, voyaged in the West as far as Lake of the Woods and Rainy River.

Obtaining a concession from the government my father started in business as a Fur Trader at La Gabelle. On July 11, 1713, Intendant Begon issued an order giving my father exclusive hunting rights, with a fine of 100 livres and the confiscation of the arms carried by poachers.

Here the happiest days of my life were spent with my father and mother, my brothers and sisters. I had three brothers older than myself, Jean-Baptiste, Pierre and François and two sisters, Catherine and Marie-Anne. Here we spent quiet peaceful years, mother giving us our early instruction and father and the guides teaching us how to take care of ourselves in the woods.

The desire of one day leading an expedition to the West in search of the "Great Sea" and other discoveries, never left the mind of my father for an instant. In truth we were all as interested as he and it was understood that we were to accompany him when he would be ready for the great adventure.

Our evenings were spent in studying what was known of the West, drawing maps and tracing the routes of the explorers, dreaming of discovering new territories and being the first to see the Great Salt Water just a little farther west. Our days were spent in learning what would be useful in finding our way through the trackless forests. We all learned to communicate with the Indians, learning several dialects.

Our business prospered and father was known far and near among the trappers and the Indians. All trappers or voyageurs who had been in the West or any Indian from the West, were sure to receive a warm welcome from my father. From them he obtained all the information possible in reference to the Indian tribes, the country, such as waterways, lakes, rivers, portages, etc.

The success of my father in dealing with the Indians was not unknown to the Governor, and

when he needed some one to take charge of the important Post at Lake Nipigon, it was my father who was asked to take charge.

These three forts were founded by Charles de Greysolon Sieur de La Tourette, the brother of Du Lhut (Duluth).

1678 Fort Camanistigoya, at the entrance of Lake Nipigon.

1684 Fort La Tourette, at the mouth of River Ombabihia.

1686 Fort des Francais, near the forks of rivers Kinagami and Albany.

These were the nearest Posts to the English on Hudson Bay, but it took twenty days hard traveling to reach the Bay. It was of the greatest importance for the French commerce in furs that the Indians from the South and West should trade at these Posts. Also from their location these Forts held a commanding position in case of trouble with either English or Indians.

With the experience of those who had gone before him, my father knew that it was necessary to pacify the savage tribes. As was his custom at La Gabelle, he continued the practice of interviewing all Indians who came from the West, and, out of the volume of tales they told him, tried to obtain facts that would afterwards be useful.

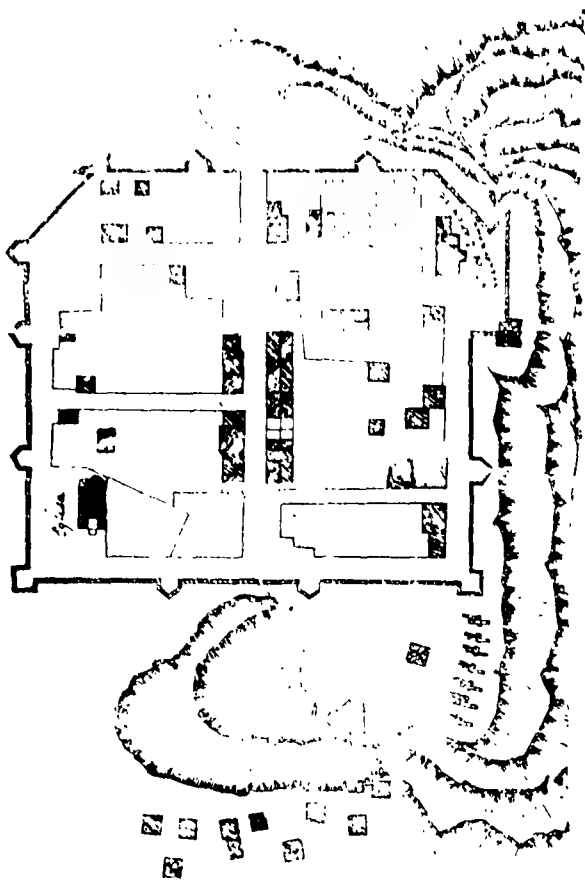
From my father's notes I find the names of three Indian Cree Chiefs, who had traveled as far West as Lake Winnipeg, Pacco and two brothers, Lefoye and Le Petit Jour; from them he obtained valuable information about Lake Winnipeg and Red River.

Another distinguished Chief of the Crees was named Tacchigis, who had made careful observations during his extensive wanderings in the West. With a burnt stick he traced many of the branches of the principal rivers in the neighbourhood of Lake Winnipeg, The River Souris to the Assiniboine to the Red River, emptying into Lake Winnipeg; Winnipeg River that drains Lake-of-the-Woods into Lake Winnipeg; The Saskatchewan from the Rocky Mountains to Lakes Manitoba and Winni-

pegasus, and another forming the source of the Missouri. A very old Chief of the Crees had a slave noted for his intelligence, which was remarkable. He had been held in captivity by a tribe of the Assiniboines, and traveled in the far West beyond Lake Winnipeg, and told many stories of the tribes living there.

This Indian information in reference to the lakes, waterways and rivers, either nameless or with unknown Indian names, was vague enough; but, to the careful observer, four such streams of water coming from the four points of the compass, must drain an immense amount of territory, and, which was still undiscovered.

My father selected a savage by the name of Ochagah (Auchagah) for guide. He had been in the West, and traced on a piece of birch bark the different routes traveled by the Indians; which brought him the distinction of being the first geographer of Western Canada. The map was sent to Montreal and then to the Governor at Quebec, and was sent with the notes and report of my father to the French Court, when a request was made of the King to finance this expedition of discovery



Plan of
Trois-Rivières
made in 1683.
Showing house
where
de La Vérendrye
was born.



Note: La Verendrye learned from the Indians of four routes to the West. After a most careful study he chose the Route of the Grand Portage. That he was wise in his choice is proved by the fact that every voyageur who followed him used the same route as long as canoes were used to make the trip. These Routes given below may be easily traced on the map.

Nipigon Route

From Nipigon Lake to Root River, Lac Seul, English River, Winnipeg River, Winnipeg Lake.

Kaministiquia Route

From Kaministiquia River to Lac des Mille Lacs, La Seine River, Little Turtle River, Rocky Inlet, Rainy Lake.

Grand Portage Route

From Pigeon River and Lake to Hunter Island Lac, a small stream, Rainy Lake.

Fond du Lac Route

St. Louis River, Little Fork River, Rainy River, Lake-of-the-Woods.

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Westward Bound

I shall not dwell on the bitter disappointment when we received no word from France. The King and his Court were squandering daily on banquets and receptions more than enough to finance the expedition, and they not only refused to help, but it was with the greatest difficulty to get them to take the necessary time to listen to the report.

While the government at Quebec appointed my father Commander and my cousin Lieutenant of the expedition of discovery to the West, not one cent did they contribute to its expense, leaving us to finance it the best we could. This is why my father, whose sole idea was that of discovery, was obliged to make a commercial enterprise out of the expedition.

We succeeded in interesting the merchants of Montreal and formed a Company for trading with

the Indians in the West. By establishing a chain of Trading Posts, the road from the East to the West could be kept open for supplies, and we would thus be able to make discoveries and treaties with the different tribes, christianizing them and teaching them to cultivate the ground.

This plan of a chain of Forts had been tried by Zacharie Robutel de La Nove and Jean Baptiste Deschailions, when in 1717 Intendent Begon sent them to the West, but, due to the hostility of the Sioux, they were not able to accomplish the work.

During the winter of 1730 and spring of 1731 all were in preparation for the start to the West. My father was now 45 years old. I well remember the great care he took in selecting the fifty men who were to accompany him, many of them were personal friends.

At this time I was but thirteen, and while I fully realized how impossible it was for father to take me with him, boy like, I was hoping until the very last that something would happen to permit me to go. Father had as young a heart as any boy and knew just how I felt.

If I should live to be a hundred years old, I shall never forget his words when he embraced me and said: "Louis, I wish I could take you with me, for I shall need you. This adventure will last for several years and I shall greatly need capable men upon whom I can depend. We shall not all come back. I want you to go to school at Quebec and learn Mathematics, Surveying and Map-Making. As soon as you are ready I shall come for you."

My brothers, Jean, Pierre and Francois, 17, 16 and 15 years old were wild with excitement when father told them they were to go with the party. My cousin Christophe Dufrost de La Jemmeray, 22 years old was appointed second in command under my father.

* * *

— 1731 —

Well it was in the early morning of June the 8th when the party left Montreal. I was permitted to go as far as Lachine Rapids with the party. Jean said to me: "Well, here we are at

what was once thought to be the gateway to China. Before we come back we shall have discovered the real "La Chine". How little we realized the great territory that separated us from the Great Sea.

With a sad heart I turned back to make final arrangements for my studies. I was determined that whenever I was needed they would find me ready and prepared. My story for the next three years will be taken from the letters and notes left by my father and cousin.

The route was the same as that of all voyageurs to the West, up the Ottawa River, 308 miles, then up the Mattawan River 34 miles to the height of Land, now down with the current to Lake Nipissing. I wish I had the space to tell of the many portages and the beautiful water falls that make the going so difficult and tedious. But all these are too well known to be described here.

Now going down the 55 miles on French River, with its many rocky places not safe for a canoe, now into the Georgian Bay with its 30,000 islands, 88 miles to Fort Michillimakinac established by Father Marquette. Here they were joined by Father Michel Messaiger, S. J., who had been appointed Chaplain for the party. He was the first priest to visit Lake-of-the-Woods.

Immediately after arriving in Canada he was sent to the Outaouais, then he went on a mission to the Algonquins — a tribe of Miami. From there he came to Fort Michillimakinac to meet the party for the West. One hundred miles more and they were at Sault Ste. Marie the entrance to Lake Superior.

Next they came to the Nipigon River (meaning, deep, clear water). Here they were met by the guide Ochakah. Four days more, on August 26th. they arrived at Fort Waministiquais, founded by Du Lhut in 1678, 400 miles from Sault Ste. Marie.

To those who are not familiar with this kind of travel, they may perhaps imagine that this would be a delightful trip; but let me assure you such is not the case. There is nothing that will sooner pull the heart out of the strongest man than this one thousand mile trip. The hard travelling, paddling up the rivers with their innumer-

able long and difficult portage, the long and steady paddling through the lakes, where, on account of the dangerous storms, which sometimes arrive without a moment's notice, it is necessary to keep near the shore, and where every bush, tree or rock may harbor a blood thirsty savage. A constant watch must be kept at all times, every bend in the course may shelter the canoes of the enemy.

When the party arrived at Pigeon River, forty miles below Fort Kaministiquias on August 27th, the men were completely exhausted. With a nine mile portage before them (Grand Portage) they refused to go farther. Indeed it was all my father could do to keep them from returning to Montreal. He realized that the men were worn out, but it was necessary that the first Fort should be built that fall. With the assistance of Father Messenger, a few of the men were persuaded to go forward. My father agreeing to return with the others to Fort Kaministiquias and remain there until spring.

These few men with my cousin Christophe in charge, together with Jean and a good guide, started immediately over the difficult route with four loaded canoes. The men had all confidence in my cousin and trusted him fully as he had proved himself to be a capable leader.

It took them seven days to pass Grand Portage, still their difficulties were not over. They were obliged to carry the canoes three miles over a mountain ridge to a chain of lakes separated by carrying places varying from half a mile to three miles. At the end of this labyrinth of lakes and connecting creeks they found the water not flowing the Lake Superior, but to the North West.

After crossing this height of Land, they soon paddled down a stream to Rainy Lake, 225 miles from Lake Superior. Crossing to where the waters empty into Rainy River they erected Fort St. Pierre, named in honor of my father.

Near at hand was a small hill which had all the appearance of having been erected by man, from the top of which was an excellent view of the country and the lake. Many Cree Indians were living near as it was the best place for fishing. (Note: - The ruins of this Fort have been definitely located and may still be seen, about two miles east of Fort Francis.)

The winter spent at Fort St. Pierre was both successful and encouraging. The Indians were greatly pleased to have the French Post near them. Trading was good, fish and game were plentiful.

In the spring they made arrangements to return to Fort Kamistiquia, telling the Indians that they would soon come back with the Captain and the other men of the expedition. They set out with a good supply of furs and arrived at the Fort on May 29th.

After the long winter of waiting without news, my father was greatly pleased to learn of their success, and it put new life in all the men. Jean started at once with the furs across Lake Superior to Fort Michillimakinac to meet the party from Montreal with supplies.

The rest of the party left for the West on June the 8th, one year from the morning they had left Montreal. They arrived at Fort St. Pierre on June 14th. Here a wonderful welcome awaited them from the Indians. They were assembled in great numbers, dressed in all their savagery and painted for the occasion. Speeches and presents were exchanged.

A start was made for the West down Rainy River, across Lake-of-the-Woods, escorted by a flotilla of half a hundred canoes of Indians in barbaric splendor. On the west bank on the lake one hundred miles from Fort St. Pierre, they erected Fort St. Charles, named in honor of Father Charles Michel Mésaiger and the Marquis Charles de Beauharnois.

(Note: — The ruins of the fort have been located).

Jean had gone East with a load of furs expecting to meet the supplies from Montreal at Fort Michillimakinac. Failing to arrive he determined to wait for the fall shipment knowing how important these were for the expedition. While waiting he made an exploring trip down the St. Mary's River to where the waters of Lakes Huron and Michigan meet.

This long delay of the return of Jean caused much anxiety to my father, and he sent Christophe to meet him. However they arrived safely at Fort

St. Charles on November 12th. In place of the four canoe loads promised, there was only one. They wintered here at Fort St. Charles trading with the Indians.

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— 1733 —

May 27th. As the supplies received were not sufficient, Christophe was sent East to have more sent and to report on conditions.

The Cree Indians sent two belts of Wampum to the Governor, as an expression of their loyalty. Father Mesolger also accompanied him, his health was very poor and he was unable to continue the work.

On September 20th. I met my cousin in Montreal, and you may be sure I was very happy to see him again and hear in detail all that had been done.

During the summer of this year my father and Jean made a trip down the Winnipeg River to Lake Winnipeg. After making a visit to the Indians at this place they crossed the lake escorted by a large company of Indians to the mouth of the Red River. Ascending this river for about two miles they erected a fort which they named Fort Fouché des Roseaux. This fort was never of great importance as a Trading Post, but it was of great service as a stopping place both for ourselves and our Indian guides. They returned to Fort St. Charles before fall.

August 10th. Very glad indeed they were to see four canoes, arrive, as no exploring could be done without supplies.

August 29th. Arrival of a large delegation of Crees, nearly a thousand, in gaily ornamented canoes, bringing large quantities of moose and buffalo meat, bear grease and wild grain.

To relieve the situation of the Fort about twenty of the men established a camp on Grassy River, about 65 miles across the lake. Here they lived hunting and fishing.

September 8th. Francois led a party to Fort St. Pierre to meet the expected supplies from Montreal.

September 28th. Four canoe loads arrive and four days later two more.

It was during this summer that Martin Ur-tuaise, an old friend of my father, joined the party. He was a very able man with much experience as an Indian Trader, so my father placed him in charge of Fort St. Pierre with a small company of men.

I speak of the Indians of this place as the Crees. In truth this large nation of Indians was composed of several small tribes, but the object of my story and space does not permit me to give a detailed account of these tribes.

In a latter work I shall give you a complete account of these tribes as we found them, together with many of their legends as recounted to me by the old men of the tribes, which will give much valuable light on their origin, language and customs.

Farther west around Lake Winnipeg lived the Assiniboines the name meaning People Who Cook Their Food by Means of Hot Stones. The other tribes I shall mention in the due course of my narrative.

These tribes of Crees and Assiniboines had an undying hatred for the blood-thirsty Sioux at the south and every season were determined to go to war against them. This was one of the great difficulties of the expedition. A prolonged war would have been a disaster. The most effective method used to prevent this was to teach the Indians to farm. The corn, beans and peas brought from the East were used as seed, and while these were growing we gathered large quantities of wild oats and rice to be used as food, which was found to be very palatable and nutritious when boiled a long time.

During the winter many Indian families would camp near the fort. Many of these gladly received instruction. One who became greatly attached to my father was an old Chief and arrow-maker over 100 years old. He took the name of La Marte Blanche.

December

A messenger arrived at Fort St. Charles from Fort St. Pierre, advising that the Crees were preparing to make war upon the Sioux. My father

sent word to them to do nothing until he arrived, which would be in a few weeks. He thought that the delay together with the cold winter would cool their fighting blood.

A large delegation of Assiniboines with six Chiefs visited Fort St. Charles requesting that a Trading Post be built at Lake Winnipeg. My father promised them this Post sometime during the next summer.

And so the winter passed, a party of 12 at Fort St. Pierre, 20 at Fort St. Charles, and 20 at the camp on Grassy River.

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— 1734 —

January 5th. The visiting Assiniboines left for their home on Lake Winnipeg.

January 12th. Messengers arrived from Fort St. Pierre asking that my father come at once, as there was danger of an immediate war.

January 16th. My father, Jean and a party left for Fort St. Pierre. It was with the greatest difficulty that he could stop an immediate war, and only succeeded in getting the Indians to promise to return home and wait till spring. They returned to Fort St. Charles arriving February 14th.

February 15th. A party of Assiniboines arrived with reference to the promised Trading Post at Lake Winnipeg.

March 7th. Two Indian guides arrived from the Assiniboines.

March 9th. Although unable to build the Post at this time, due to the lack of supplies, he sent Pierre to lead a party on a visit to the Lake Winnipeg district.

May 7th. A war party of Crees assembled at Fort St. Charles. The Chief made an address which was recorded by my brother as follows:—

“At whom are we to strike? If you wish I will tell you the thought of our warriors. I am Chief, it is true, but I am not always master of their will. If you will let us have your son to come with us, we will go straight wherever you tell us; but, if you refuse, I cannot answer for where the blow may fall. I have no doubt you

know the thought of our kindred, the Crees. But I do not hide the fact from you that there are several Chiefs among us whose hearts are bitter against the Sioux. You know that some of them keep coming on our lands till the snow falls. If they do not kill any one, it is because they are discovered. Decide what you are going to do!"

May 9th. Grand Council was held with the Indians, and, after consulting with his companions, my father concluded that he would be obliged to let Jean go with them.

May 10th. Six canoes of furs were sent to Fort Kaministiquia.

May 11th. The Indian warriors started on their campaign against the Sioux, but it did not amount to very much. Jean returned in a few weeks and the Indians to their homes.

May 27th. Return of Pierre and the party who were exploring near Lake Winnipeg, and my father left for the East the same day, leaving Pierre in charge of Fort St. Charles.

June 16th. He arrived at Fort Kaministiquia.

June 19th. Left.

July 6th. Arrived at Fort Michillimakinac. Christophe arriving from Montreal a few hours later.

July 12th. My father left for the East and Christophe for the West.

August 16th. My father arrived at Montreal.

Following the directions left by my father Fort Maurepas was erected during this summer at the mouth of the Winnipeg River on Lake Winnipeg.

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— 1735 —

I had now finished my course of instruction at the College of the Jesuits in Quebec and was very happy to go with my father as he needed me.

June 21st. — We left Montreal accompanied by Father Jean-Pierre Aulneau de La Touche, S.J., who was replacing Father Mesaiger, I should like to describe my first trip to the West, the remembrance of which will ever remain fresh in my mem-

ory, but I must continue the account of our adventures.

September 6th. --- We arrived at Fort St. Charles.

October 23rd. - - Christophe started for Fort Maurepas where he was to take charge of the Fort for the winter. My father remained with us at Fort St. Charles, preparing for a start for the West in the spring. Getting together all the information available I prepared maps of all the country explored.

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— 1736 —

January 15th. Fort St. Charles. — My father learning that Christophe had been sick last summer was sorry he had allowed him to go alone. As we became somewhat anxious, Jean and I determined to go to Fort Maurepas as soon as the weather permitted. I was particularly anxious to make the trip as I wished to verify the position and distance of the rivers and lakes so as to make whatever corrections might be necessary on my maps.

February 1st. - - The weather being favorable we started for Lake Winnipeg on our snowshoes. I also took with me my skates which I had brought from Trois-Rivières. We made good time as the going was excellent. We stopped at Point of the Woods. Many Indians were living at this place and we had very comfortable accommodation. They were highly honored to have us stop with them. Of course we did not forget to make the customary presents a little tobacco and a few trinkets. The next morning we had a large escort of hunters who accompanied us part of the way.

Fort Maurepas. - - Arriving at the Fort we found Christophe in a very poor health. In January he had taken a high fever which had left him very weak. I had brought with me some medicine and a little nourishing food; but the letters I brought from his sister and friends did him the most good.

Fort Maurepas. February 20th. — The weather continued cold and the ice in very good condition. I made frequent trips either on my skates or snowshoes. This day I set out on my skates

intending to be gone all day, visiting the traps that had previously been set for game; resetting those that had been sprung, and putting on fresh bait.

At noon I stopped for lunch. I had taken off my skates, made a fire to melt some ice in order to make some tea, and was just starting my dinner when, without the slightest warning, I was surrounded by no less than a dozen savages. My gun was in my hands, but it was useless to think of defending myself, an attempt would only make them angry. They were a small party of Sioux from the South, out on a scouting expedition. As they made no threats I remained calm and tried to get them to talk. Although I had studied the Sioux tongue, I did not understand them very well.

They were the first Sioux Indians that I had met. I learned however, that they intended to take me with them as a slave and that they were now on their way home. I determined to avoid this at all cost, as I knew it would cause my father much worry and might perhaps delay the exploring trip in the spring. I continued to be as friendly as possible with the Chief, giving him some tea and cold meat. I also made him a present of some tobacco, which by chance I had with me. This put him in a very good humor. All at once he saw my skates lying near the fire. He examined them carefully and asked me what they were.

I told him that with these on his feet he could fly over the ice as a bird flies in the air. He was as eager as a child to try them and demanded that I fasten them on his feet. I proceeded to do this, all the Indians watching with great amazement. I got him on his feet and started him off with a gentle push. Immediately his head and feet changed places. Again I raised him to his feet, but no sooner was he up than he was down. Meanwhile the others were having the time of their lives. Doubled up with laughter they kept encouraging him to try again.

After several ineffective attempts, he sat down and could not be persuaded to try again. He now insisted that I put them on and show him how to fly over the ice as a bird in the air. Here was the chance I had been waiting for. With pretended reluctance I proceeded to put them on and

commenced to out do the Chief in falling, going through the most comical actions that I could think of. I kept them howling with laughter until their sides must have ached.

At last I pretended not to be able to rise, and motioned to the Chief to hand me my gun to help me to get on my feet. At last with the help of my gun, I was on my feet and able to make a little progress. Now I was up, now I was down, but always a little farther away. I could see the Indians were commencing to be a little uneasy, and soon the Chief shouted to me to return. I knew the time for action had arrived. Letting myself fall again, I carefully rose, and as I stooped to pick up my gun, I gathered all my force for a supreme effort.

Then I was off like an arrow from the bow. The Indians were so surprised and astonished that it was fully half a minute before they realised what was taking place. By the time the arrows commenced to fly in my direction, I was beyond their reach. While this gave me a hearty laugh, I was thankful enough to have escaped so well and resolved to be more prudent in the future.

April 10th. Fort Maurepas. — Greatly to our disappointment Christophe continued to grow weaker and was only able to sit up a few hours at a time. We became greatly alarmed and made preparations to leave at once for Fort St. Charles, as the waterways were free enough of ice to permit us to go by canoe. We lined the bottom of the canoe with thick layers of furs and placed him carefully upon them. We then abandoned the Fort and accompanied by all the men we crossed the lake to Red River and up to Fort Fourche aux Roseaux.

May 1st. Fort Fourche aux Roseaux. — Christophe was now so weak we were obliged to stop. It soon became apparent that we would never reach Fort St. Charles, so we did all we could to make him comfortable.

May 10th. — I will not dwell on this sad scene. Christophe had written a long letter to his sister while at Fort Maurepas. As he was now too weak to write, I wrote for him a few last words to her, and also a few words to my father. After praying with him he went quietly to sleep from which he never woke. And thus my cousin died

at the age of 27, due to the hardships and privations he had endured. No task was too difficult for him to undertake, and he seemed to have the ability to surmount all difficulties no matter how great. All the men, even the Indians, had full confidence in him and were always ready to follow his lead. We buried him here at Fort Fourche de Roseaux, marking the grave with a wooden cross.

June 2nd. Fort St. Charles. -- Due to the conditions of the route we were delayed somewhat in reaching the fort. It was with sad hearts that we broke the news to father.

Father Aulneau was preparing for a mission to Lake Winnipeg. It was the fishing season, when the Assiniboines came in great numbers to the lake for white fish, and he wished to profit by the occasion and in the autumn follow them to the West, where he wished to commence work among the Mandans, a nation of Indians living in villages and possessing a much higher civilization than the nomadic tribes. He hoped to be more successful with these sedentary tribes.

The closing of Fort Maurepas necessitated a change in his plans and he could not think of going farther this year. He decided to return East with the boats carrying furs and the men who were to meet the supplies coming West.

June 8th. Fort St. Charles. — At the earnest request of Father Aulneau Jean took charge of the party of 19 Frenchmen to meet the supplies and hurry them forward.

* * *

THE MASSACRE

The details of this frightful massacre will never be known, as the morning when they left Fort St. Charles was the last they were ever seen by white men. There had been rumors of a band of Sioux warriors who might attack the Fort or the party bringing in the supplies. It was for this reason Father Aulneau insisted on Jean taking charge of the party, as he was esteemed very highly among both the white men and the Indians. From all that can be learned they made camp twenty-one miles from the fort on a small island (Massacre Island) situated west of the

southern point of Bay Island. Here they were surprised and massacred by the Sioux.

June 20th. — A party of five Traders with 30 Indian guides coming from Sault Ste. Marie landed on the island and discovered the massacre. Father Aulneau, when found, was in a position which led them to believe he was in the act of giving the last rites of the Church to his dying companions when killed. John was lying face down his back terribly cut and mutilated. The remains were carefully interred and they hastened to bring the sad news to the Fort.

September 17th. — The remains of the massacred party were brought here at Fort St. Charles and buried under the Chapel.

(Note: In the month of August 1908, Monsignor Langevin, Archbishop of St. Boniface, instituted a search for these remains. The site of the old Fort St. Charles was located, and the relics of the saintly Father Aulneau, the valiant Jean-Baptiste de La Verendrye, and those of their companions, have been taken to St. Boniface, where they will be preserved henceforth and surrounded by respect and affection.)

I learned later through a friendly Sioux, that the Chalice, the Consecrated Stone, and some Alter Vestments of Father Aulneau fell into the hands of an Indian woman who was the mother of several of the warriors. Shortly after this she witnessed the death of all her children. She attributed this to the profanation of the sacred objects, and becoming alarmed she threw them into the river. Nevertheless several articles were carefully preserved as relics of a saint. His Calotte was sent to his mother, and several persons claimed to have received special graces by his intercession. In one of his letters to his superior he foretold his death.

July and August. Fort St. Charles — The Indians, always ready to go to war almost without provocation were now insisting on making war against the Sioux. The Crees called my father their Grand Chief Councillor, and Jean had been elected a Chief of the tribe and had led a party of warriors in their war of 1734. They felt that they must now avenge his death, and wanted us to go with them. It was with the greatest difficulty that my father prevented them from starting immediately.

September. Fort St. Charles. — The Assinibolnes at Lake Winnipeg were anxious that we open again a fort near them. A delegation arrived asking that we make them a visit. After holding a consultation Pierre and a few men were sent to Fort Maurepas, and as soon as reinforcements and supplies arrived they were to start for the country on the Mandans.

October 15th. Fort St. Charles. — The Indians were still determined to go to war. On this date nine canoes of savages arrived and were determined that my father should lead them. They had also appointed Pierre Chief to take the place of Jean.

October 24th. — The final war council was held and on account of the lateness of the season my father succeeded in getting the expedition postponed. The warriors were assembled at Point du Bois on the Winnipeg River.

— 000 —

— 1737 —

January 2nd. Fort St. Charles. — Our scouts brought in the good news that the warriors assembled at Point au Bois had left for their homes. Messengers also brought the news that all was well at Fort Maurepas, and the Indians wanted my father to visit them and attend the Grand Council to be held there. Due to the lack of reinforcements and supplies Pierre was unable to make the proposed exploring trip.

February 8th. — My father Francois and I, with several of the men, and accompanied by many Indians left Fort St. Charles. On our way to Lake Winnipeg we were joined by several parties of Indians.

February 25th. Fort Maurepas. — Our large party arrived and received a royal welcome. My father was very glad to have this opportunity to speak at this Council attended by representatives from so many tribes covering such a wide extent of territory. It gave him an opportunity to learn more of the land to the West and of its water ways. It also gave him an opportunity to get their minds off the desire to go to war, by encouraging them to cultivate the ground, to harvest their wild oats and rice; he also furnished them all the



seed we could spare, such as wheat, corn, peas, oats, beans, etc., that they might have food for the winter. He also encouraged them to hunt for furs, which they could exchange for the things they so much desired.

March 4th, Council Day at Fort Maurepas. — The minds of the Indians were for the time turned from thoughts of war to hunting and farming. To their great delight he arranged with them that for gifts of powder and shot and tobacco they would furnish fifty scouts, each spring and fall to accompany the canoes to Fort Michillimackinac when they carried furs and brought back supplies. They desired a Trading Post on Red River and it was agreed that Pierre would go with them to build a Post at this place.

March 11th. My father and I return to Fort St. Charles.

May 28th. — Pierre and Francois arrive after making explorations around the Lake Winnipeg region.

June 3rd. — Due to the shortage of men and the non-arrival of supplies it was impossible to think of making any extensive explorations this season. My father had made preparations for a trip East. Leaving Pierre in command, he left this day with 14 canoes of furs. The Indians sent some wampum belts to the Governor as an expression of their good will and loyalty. He was also accompanied by an old Chief, a brother of the Chief at Lake-of-the-Woods, who, while in the East, was shown such honors and treated with so much respect, that his stoicism was completely broken down and he never ceased talking about the things he had seen, and of the honors shown to him. They arrived at Montreal the last of August.

With a heart torn and bleeding with bereavement and disappointment, to which my father could not give expression before the Indians, the sympathy and encouragement he had a right to expect from those who remained in safety and profited from the furs for which he risked everything, was totally lacking. He was received coldly, criticized and even accused of false dealings.

This was in great contrast to the sympathy of our Cree and Assiniboine friends. Enemies and rivals had already been at work poisoning the minds of those who had previously been our

friends. This is only too true and a matter of record. I will cite but one instance, which is a fair example of many.

The one in whose honor we had named a fort; while in high power, seated in comfort, surrounded with luxury and friends of power and culture, with delicious food within easy reach, even before hungry; in a letter dated France April 22, 1737, to the Governor at Quebec, accused my father of false dealings.

In contrast, our entire fortune was invested, not for the purpose of making money in furs, but only for the purpose of discovery for the glory of France and Canada. Our very lives were in constant danger. Going for long periods without food, companionship of Indians, the long cold winters with insufficient food and remedies, many times obliged to eat food made from the bark of trees ground into flour, at times obliged to eat food not fit for a dog.

At all times we had in mind the civilizing and christianizing of the Indians, preventing wars among the tribes, teaching them to cultivate the soil. The success of our work in this respect will be revealed only in the future.

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— 1738 —

June 18th. — My father left Montreal to return West. Not receiving the assistance from the government or others that he so much needed, by his own efforts he succeeded in getting together a small company of 22 men and six canoes of supplies.

July 20th. — Arrived at Fort Michillimakinac.

Aug. 5th. — Arrived at Fort Kaministigoya.

Aug. 22th. — Arrived at Fort St. Pierre.

Aug. 31st. — Arrived at Fort St. Charles.

The Crees gave him a warm welcome calling him their father. A large delegation of Assiniboines from Lake Winnipeg came to welcome him. He granted their request that Pierre, whom they liked very much, should be Chief of the tribes at Lake Winnipeg. Soon after the death of Jean he had been made Chief of the Crees at Lake-of-the-Woods.

The Indian Chief, speaking for his warriors, said that the waters of the lake were still red with the blood of his son and the other Frenchmen, demanding justice, and that he ceased not to mourn their death. It was with great difficulty that we could quiet them and prevent them from going to war against the Sioux.

September 11th. — At this date commenced the trip to the Mandans to which we had so long looked forward. Pierre remained as Commander at Fort St. Charles, François and I accompanied the expedition.

September 22nd. — Arrived at Fort Maurepas, of which the Sieur de Louvière D'Amours was in charge.

September 23rd. — Visited the grave of Christophe at Fort Fourche aux Roseaux.

September 24th. — At the juncture of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. We were the first white men to set foot on the soil where the capital of Manitoba is located. This part of the city is to this day called Fort Rouge.

NOTE. There have been five fur trader's posts at the place where the City of Winnipeg now stands.

1736 Fort Rouge

1804 Fort Gibraltar

1813 Fort Douglas

1821 Old Fort Garry

1835 New Fort Garry.

The Indian Chief who accompanied father East was with us, he seemed to know all the tribes in this section. Here at the Forks was an Indian village and they gave us a warm welcome. These Indians went each year to Hudson Bay to trade their furs, but promised to trade with the French if they would establish a Post here. A little later, about Oct. 9th, some of the men erected at this place Fort Rouge; and about 200 miles up the Red River, what is now Dakota, they built a Fort, Point-of-the-Woods.

September 26th. — Started up the Assiniboine, many Assiniboine Indians met and followed us.

October 2nd. — Water very low, and advised by the Indians that it was impossible to take the

canoes farther, and recommended that a fort be erected at this place, 180 miles from Red River we would meet everybody at the portage.

This place is still called Portage La Prairie. From here a well travelled trail of 14 miles leads to Lake Manitoba. Northward the whole length of the lake, the Indians make their way to Lake Winnipegosis, from here it is possible to get the canoes to the Saskatchewan River, the Athabasca River, and the Great Slave Lake. Still beyond is the Mackenzie River and the Northern Lakes.

By going down the Saskatchewan River, there is Cedar Lake and Lake Winnipeg, then the Nelson River and Hudson Bay. When the water is high it is possible to make an excursion of many hundred miles up the Assiniboine, the Souris and the Qu'Appelle. To the South is the Missouri, whose waters reach the Gulf of Mexico.

October 3rd. to 15th. — We erected here at the Portage on the Assiniboine River Fort La Reine. A wise and prudent man named Sanschagrin was placed in charge.

October 18th. — Our trip commenced with twenty men, and about 25 Indians, but this number of red brothers augmented from day to day. We were unable to make the progress we had expected, on account of the many Indians coming to meet us, giving evidence of great joy and professed friendship, asking to be adopted as children of my father.

This ceremony of adoption was by placing his hands on the head of the Chief. We were obliged to stop for several days at a village of over 600 Indians. On the way we met large herds of bison, and our hunters were able to keep us well supplied with food.

December 3rd. — After a journey of about 360 miles we arrived at a village of the Mandans, where we were received with demonstrations of great joy. Much time was spent in feasting, they having large quantities of corn, beans and pumpkins, and the hunters furnished buffalo meat. Here we had the misfortune to lose a sack of merchandise containing presents intended for the Chief. This was evidently stolen by one of the Indians who accompanied us.

The Mandans possess six villages, five of which are on the Missouri River and one farther

back from the river. The largest of these contained about 150 cabins, circular, arranged in a regular manner, with streets remarkably clean and everything well conducted.

The village is surrounded by a strong palisade, which was covered at the most exposed places with untanned buffalo hides. A ditch 15 feet deep and about 18 to 20 feet wide ran around the walls giving an effective protection to the village from an attack of unfriendly savages.

The Mandans are lighter in color than the other Indians and a number of the females have light hair. Evidently they have had an origin different from the other tribes. They guarded their valuables by placing them in sacks and hanging it from a pole which they erected above their cabins. They dress in skins, tattoo their bodies, make baskets and clay pots. They cultivate corn, beans and pumpkins.

The men and boys play a very interesting game of ball with great enjoyment. They owned horses, and with the aid of these and some guides, François and I made long trips, learning as much as possible about the country.

We had thought of wintering here as the Indians were friendly, but due to the lack of suitable presents (most of these had been stolen) and in the spring the ground would be soft, the rivers high and full of ice, two Frenchmen and an Indian agreed to remain to learn the language, and we were to return the following year.

* * *

— 1739 —

January 8th. — We commenced our return trip, which was long and painful. The cold was severe, at times 40 to 50 below zero. Food was difficult to obtain. Father became very sick and we had no suitable remedies.

March 10th. — Very glad indeed to arrive at Fort La Reine, where father could receive better care and recover his health.

April 16th. Pierre led a party to Lake Manitoba and erected a post on the north west side of the lake.

May 20th. — Discovered the Saskatchewan

River, which the Indians reported as coming from a great distance in the West. With the exception of the Missouri River all the waters flow North. The Saskatchewan River we believed to be a water-way to the Rocky Mountains.

September 25th. — My mother died in Montreal.

In the spring we had sent a large consignment of furs to the East which were stolen on the way and the canoes returned practically empty. We were now almost without supplies, £10,000 in debt, the season too far advanced to permit a trip East this fall, and obliged to wait till the next spring. These financial difficulties necessitated a great change in our plans. Our expected trip must be postponed for another year.

* * *

— 1740 —

Again it was necessary to go East to arrange for necessary supplies. Pierre was placed in charge with instructions to make explorations at the north-east of the lakes. Francois and I were to go to Fort La Reine and make arrangements with the Mandans for guides for our trip to the West as soon as the supplies arrived.

August 25th. — Immediately after his arrival in Montreal legal action was taken against my father; the forts, stock of furs, and other property were seized. The affairs were so complicated that it was impossible to get them straightened out so as to return before next year.

In order to avoid long delays and save as much valuable time as possible, my father settled these suits with great loss to himself. He now presented to the Governor the results which we had been able to accomplish, the large territory, the many lakes, rivers and water-ways we had discovered, the friendship and loyalty of the many Indian tribes we had gained and held, the many forts and trading posts we had established at important places; the importance of continuing the explorations and taking possession of the territory as far as the ocean, in order that Canada might not be shut off from the Great Sea at the west by some other nation.

He spoke of the need of keeping the routes

open in order that supplies might reach the exploring parties. Now that Fort Beauharnois had been abandoned there was nothing to prevent the Sioux from coming to the North.

If a general war started, it would break all communications between the East and the West. He spoke of the importance of sending missionaries to the different tribes to enlighten them and teach them how to live in a more civilized manner.

* * *

— 1741 —

June 26th. — My father left Montreal for the West.

September 19th. — He arrived at Fort St. Charles.

October 13th. — He arrived at Fort La Reine.

During the absence of father we had made several trips, mostly to the west of the lakes. Pierre and I passed over the Prairie Portage and north across the Lake Manitoba, through the south end of Lake Winnipegosis and by Mossy River to Lake Dauphin. Here on the north-west side near where the Valley River enters the lake we built Fort Dauphin.

We built Fort Bourbon on Lake Winnipegosis where River aux Blanches (Red Deer River) enters the lake.

* * *

Discovery of The Rocky Mountains

— 1742 —

April 29th. Accompanied by Pierre and two Frenchmen named Louis La Londe and A. Miotte, we left Fort La Reine for the Mandans where we expected to meet some guides from the Horse Indians. My father was unable to accompany us on this trip due to the wars among the tribes. He was unable to pacify them and was obliged to remain to protect the fort.

May 19th. — Arrived at the Mandans village, as the guides had not arrived we waited about two months for them.

July 23rd. — Taking some guides from the

Mandans we commenced our voyage to the west—south-west.

August 11th. — We arrived at a village of Horse Indians, but all the inhabitants had left, having gone to war. Our guides refused to go farther. We erected a shelter to wait for the return of the warriors to their village.

August 29th. — One of our guides left us.

September 14th. — The last of our guides abandoned us. However we determined to continue our route.

October 12th. — Arrived at a village of Beaux Hommes (probably Crow).

October 25th. — They furnished us with a guide and we continued traveling south-west.

November 2nd. — We met the Little Fox and Ploya Indians.

November 19th. — We arrived at the home of the Horse Indians. We found them in a sad state, having suffered a great loss in a battle with the Snake Indians — a fierce and strong nation. They were very much discouraged as 17 of their villages had been burned, many of their women and children taken as slaves. We were unable to procure guides here as they were afraid of the Snake Indians.

November 21st. — Arrived in the country of the Bow Indians. These warriors were going to the west against the Snake Indians. As we had no other guide we followed them.

* * *

— 1743 —

January 1st. — We came in view of the Rocky Mountains.

January 12th. — We arrived at the foot of the mountains. In haste we commenced to climb them. Surely the Great Sea must be in full view from the top. Indian scouts sent out in advance brought back the news that there was a large Snake village in front of us. The Bow Indians became panic stricken and deserted us.

Abandoned by our guides, in the middle of winter, with a barbarous enemy in front of us, we were compelled to retrace our steps. I was very much disappointed not to be able to climb to

the top of the mountain as I had so ardently wished.

February 9th. — We came up with the Bow Indians and continued to travel with them until about the first of March.

March 5th. — We met a party of Cherry Indians who were on their way to their village. As they were very friendly we went with them.

March 19th. — We arrived at the stronghold of these savages on the banks of the Missouri River. Here we met an Indian who could speak Spanish very well. He had been baptised and could recite several prayers.

March 30th. — Here upon the top of a small hill near the Indian village we placed in the earth, without the knowledge of the Indians, a lead plaque on one side of which were engraved the names of the French King and the Arms of France, the name of the Governor of Canada, the name of father. On the reverse side we scratched with a knife our names and the date. Then we erected a pyramid of stones over the spot and told the Indians it was in memory of our visit.

Note: This spot was never definitely located and the plaque lay buried for 170 years, when, on Sunday, February 16th. 1913, it was found by some children playing on a hill near the city of Pierre, South Dakota.

On the face under the arms of the King of France

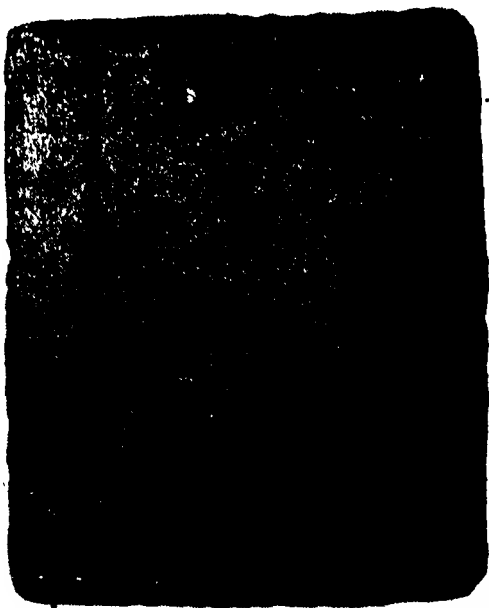
Ano XXVI Regni Ludovici XV, pro Rege
Illustrissimo Domino Domino Marchione
de Beauharnois MDCCXXXL
Petrus Gaultier de Lavérendrie posuit

on the reverse

posé par le
Chevalier de Lavr
ts (témoins) sont Louy La Londette
A Molte
le 30 de mars 1743



Face of the plaque
buried by sons of
de la Vérendrye
near city of
Pierre, S.D.





Back
of
the same
plaque



April 2nd. — Left the village of the Cherry Indians.

May 18th. — Arrived at the Mandans.

May 27th. — Left the country of the Mandans.

June 2nd. — Arrived at Fort La Reine where father was anxiously waiting for us. After holding a consultation we decided that our next voyage of discovery should be made up the Saskatchewan River and that we must build forts at convenient places to facilitate the trip.

Autumn. — It was necessary for father to go East again. Here he found conditions to be unbearable and he felt obliged to resign as Commander of the expedition.

* * *

— 1746 —

Nothing being accomplished in the two years by the Sieur de Noyelles, who had been appointed in the place of my father, he asked to be relieved of his duties.

My father was re-appointed, but for some reason his appointment was held up.

* * *

— 1747 —

The Count de La Gallassoniere replaced the Marquis de Beauharnois as Governor, and he immediately commenced to right the wrongs done to my father.

* * *

— 1748 —

During the summer of this year we rebuilt Fort Maurepas, which had been burned by the Indians. Fort La Reine was also repaired. Going past the abandoned Fort Bourbon, No. 1, we decided to rebuild it (Fort Bourbon No. 2) on Cedar Lake. This lake is an enlargement, near the mouth, of the Saskatchewan River.

Going up the Saskatchewan to where the Pasquia enters it we built a fort and I named it

Fort Le Pas, in Memory of our mother. Going on up the river as far as the juncture of the North and South Rivers, we built Fort à la Corne.

* * *

— 1749 —

The Count de La Gallissoniere appeared in person before the French Court and raised his voice so effectively on behalf of my father that the King and his Ministers were swift to end the wrongs he had borne so long.

Such reparation as lay in their power was made. He was appointed a Captain of Marines and a Chevalier of the Military Order of Saint Louis; and the Count immediately appointed him as Captain of his Guards.

My father, now restored to the honors due him made full preparations for an early start for the West the following spring.

December 6th. — He died in Montreal and was buried in the Church of Notre Dame.

As I now look back over the hardships of the severe Canadian winter storms without shelter, in constant danger of the wild beasts of the forests, in dangerous rapids in strange rivers, constantly exposed to the dangers of the numerous tribes of barbarous Savages; I can now say without fear of successful contradiction that my father was particularly and extraordinarily endowed for the task he set for himself.

First of all his particular and circumspect treatment of the savages which enabled him to gain not only their confidence and respect but also their affection; who were by nature defiant and suspicious, the least incident was enough to provoke their anger and hatred, prompt in action and implacable in their thirst for vengeance, giving free rein to their passions, especially hatred, cruelty and jealousy.

Universally he was lovingly styled "Father", and, among the friendly tribes, his least wish was law. Among the Sioux and other enemy tribes he was always held in high respect, and never was a hand lifted against us, except the one terrible event on the Isle of Massacre which was due to a most unfortunate misunderstanding of the cruel

deception of a small tribe, placing the blame of a cowardly act upon the French.

After we received the news of the death of our father we came East and never had the opportunity of returning to the West. In spite of all our efforts, pleading our experience, ability and skill, we were utterly ignored when appointments were made for continuing the work.

Here my story must end, our explorations extended to the Rocky Mountains and from the Missouri River to north of the Saskatchewan, and no explorations reached farther for at least fifty years after our return from the West.

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Forts and Trading Posts

—1731—

Saint Pierre on Rainy Lake where the waters empty into Rainy River, near the present site of Fort Francis.

—1732—

Saint Charles on the West side of Lake-of-the-Woods.

—1733—

Fourche des Roseaux on Red River within two miles of Lake Winnipeg, about six miles from the present site of Selkirk.

—1734—

Maurepas at the mouth of the Winnipeg River on Lake Winnipeg.

—1738—

Rouge at the mouth of the Assiniboine River and the Red River where the City of Winnipeg now stands.

La Reine on the Assiniboine River, 180 miles from Red River, now called Portage La Prairie.

Souris, a small fort at the juncture of the Assiniboine and Souris Rivers.

Point du Bois, 200 miles up the Red River beyond the boundary of the United States.

—1739—

Manitoba (Kinosota), on the north-west side of Lake Manitoba.

—43—

Dauphin on the north-west side of Lake Dauphin, one or two miles from Valley River.

Bourbon No. 1, at the mouth of Red Deer River (Rivière aux Biches) on Lake Winnipegosis.

Bourbon No. 2, on Lake Cedar and Saskatchewan River.

Le Pas, some distance up the Saskatchewan River, where is now "The Pas."

Le Corne (Poskoÿac), at the two forks of the Saskatchewan River near the city of Prince Albert.

Record of Deaths

May 10, 1736 — Christophe at Fort Fourche des Roseaux.

June 8, 1736 — Jean at the Isle of Massacre.

September 25, 1739 — The wife of La Vérendrye at Montreal.

December 6, 1749 — La Vérendrye at Montreal.

September 13, 1755 — Pierre at the siege of Quebec.

November 19, 1756 — The first wife of Louis-Joseph at Montreal. Their child died a short time after.

November 15, 1761 — Louis-Joseph and his sisters Marie-Ann and Catherine, their husbands who were brothers, Hippolite and Jean Leber, together with the two sons of Jean and Catherine, Jacques aged 15, and Louis-Joseph aged 13; all perished in the shipwreck of the Augusta, off the coast of Cape Breton.

July 31, 1794 — François (not married) at Montreal.

March 3, 1824 — The second wife of Louis-Joseph at Montreal.

Place Names

Assiniboine — Indian for "Those who cook by placing hot stones in water."

Battleford — Indian for "Ford of Battle," many bloody battles took place here.

Battle River — Many bloody battles took place here.

Athabasca — Indian for "Place where there are reeds."

Belly River — Took its name from a tribe of Indians who were called "Belly People" by the others.

Blackfoot — Tribe of Indians called Blackfeet because they blackened their moccasins.

Bow River — The Indians found good bow wood here.

Bourbon — Fort Bourbon named in honor of the Bourbons of France.

Bull's Forehead Hill — From the shape of the hill, also many herds of buffaloes assembled here.

Corne — Fort Le Corne, named after the explorer Le Corne.

Charles — Fort St. Charles, named in honor of Father Charles Michel Mesalger and of the Marquis Charles de Beauharnois.

Crow's Nest — A band of Crow warriors killed here.

Cuthead Creek — A cree warrior eloped with a Stony squaw, was captured and beheaded here.

Cutknife — Name of a Chief who was killed here.

Dauphin — Fort Dauphin and Lake named in honor of the Dauphin of France.

Deadman Hill — Scene of a battle.

Deadman Lake — The Indian word, "Hahpeukaketachtch" meaning "Man who got stabbed."

Ebb and Flow Lake — The waters rise and fall.

Elbow River — Named from a bend in the river.

Englishman Lake — A Hudson Bay clerk drowned here.

Etzikom — Blackfoot name for "valley."

Footprint Lake — Indian translation from its shape.

Fourche des Roseaux — A fort of this name where the Red River breaks into several branches

to enter Lake Winnipeg. Many water plants growing in the river.

Ghost River Indian translation "The river of ghosts."

Green Bay Bale des Puants.

Indian Head An Indian skull found at this place.

Jumping Lake The waters never still.

Jumpingpound Creek Where the buffaloes were driven over a cliff.

Kicklinghorse Pass --- A vicious horse seriously injured a geologist named Dr. Hector, at this place.

Killsquaw Lake Indian woman killed here.

Kinosota Fort Manitoba on the west side of Lake Manitoba.

Lake-of-the-Woods The many forests around it. Lac des Christineaux.

La Reine Fort La Reine named in honor of the queen of France.

Manigotagan Lake & River --- Indian for "Bad Throat."

Manitoba --- Indian name for sound of waves dashing on stones. "The Straits of the Spirit."

Medicine Hat --- Saamis Blackfoot name for Head Dress of the Medicine Man.

Moose Jaw From an Indian word meaning "The place where the White Man mended the cart with the jaw of the moose."

Maurepas Fort Maurepas named in honor of the Minister of the Colonies.

Nipigon Indian for Deep, Clear Water.

Obetoks Blackfoot word meaning "Lots of Stones."

Old Man River --- The country here called The Old Man's Playground.

Pagota Indian for "where they play ball."

Pas Fort La Pas, --- The sons of La Vérendrye named this fort in honor of their mother who was the daughter of the Sieur de l'Île du Pas.

Peace River Where the Indian tribes met to make peace.

Piapot --- Name of a brave Assiniboine Chief.

Pierre Fort St. Pierre, named in honor of La Vérendrye.

Pierre — Lac St. Pierre, Indian name Angouleme.

Pigeon River — First named Grosesilliers. Indian name Nantahavagone.

Point du Bois — Point-of-the-Woods, — A meeting place of the Indians on the Winnipeg River about half way to Fort Maurepas.

Point-of-the-Woods — Point du Bois, — A small Fort about 200 miles up the Red River.

Ponoka — Blackfoot for "elk" or "elk."

Portage-la-Prairie — The site of Fort La Reine.

Poskoyac — Indian name given to the Saskatchewan River.

Qu'Appelle — Indian story of a girl whose lover called her from the hills. She started in her canoe to meet him, a mist settled over her, when it lifted she had disappeared and was never seen again. Her spirit still lingers and when any one calls she asks: "qu'appelle?"

Rainy River Lake — Ouchichig. Tekamamiouen. Meaning "It Rains All The Time."

Red Deer — The Biche. From the Cree "Was-kasu."

Reine—Fort La Reine. Named in honor of the queen.

Regina — Named in honor of Queen Victoria. This place was once called "Pile of Bones."

Rouge — Red River. Named for the red color of the water.

Rouge — Fort Rouge. Name of a fort on the Red River.

Saskatchewan — Indian name for "swift Water."

Saskatoon — Indian name for a berry, which grew at this place.

Seven Persons — Seven white people found death at this place.

Slave River & Lake — From a tribe of Indians known as "Slaves."

Souris River — A south branch of the Assiniboine River.

Souris — Fort Souris built at the forks of these two rivers..

Swift Current — From the Indian translation of Saskatchewan.

Tongue Creek — At this place an Indian killed a great number of elks and hung their tongues on a pole, the mice ran up the pole and stole the tongues.

Tramping Lake — From the Indian name for "A Long Tramp."

Wabamum — From the Cree meaning "Mirror."

Wetaskiwin — Indian word meaning "Hills of Peace."

Winnipeg — Ojibpigon. Indian word meaning "Muddy Water." (Ojibway).

Yellow Head Pass — François Decolgne, a yellow haired fur trader hid his furs here. He was called "Tête Jaune & Yellow Head."



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